

From GEDS to PhDs



## LIFETIME

Low-Income Families'  
Empowerment through Education

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To: Congressman Jim McDermott, House of Representatives Ways and Means  
Subcommittee on Income Security and Family Support

Hello my name is Trinity Bodine and I'm a single mother in Hayward, California. I am getting close to timing off TANF/CalWORKs and I am panicking! I really don't know how I am going to pay rent and insurance and all of those things, let alone afford my school books. Also, the welfare work requirements are hard. Now that I am a full time student I barely have any time to work. Besides, with the economy in such bad shape, the jobs just aren't there. It would be so helpful to stay on CalWORKs until I graduate from Chabot College.

The CalWORKs/TANF program helps me feed and support my children until I can finish school and do so myself. TANF has provided my child with child care when there was no other support for him. I would not be able to work or attend school without childcare. Without the help of TANF I really would have had no hope. Books plus my school supplies are so expensive, I won't be able to pay for them with just financial aid and still have enough money to get by. The transportation support check takes a huge load off of my finances. Normally I have to fill up my tank three times a month at \$80.00 each time to get to and from school and my other welfare to work activities. The \$80 I get every month is a full tank of gas. All of these expenses go beyond what I can afford on my own. Right now I am doing a double major in childhood development and nursing, so if it takes a long time to get in the nursing program (there are waiting lists) I can work as a childhood professional in the meanwhile. With a nursing degree, I'll make at least \$65,000 a year and never be on welfare again.

I believe I have a great plan, but it means that I will be in school longer. I just pray that I will be able to make it after I time off TANF. I think that mothers who are taking advantage of what TANF has to offer, and who work hard at school and work should be given an extension of services, and not have a time limit. Many parents like me ended up on TANF because of poor choices and messed up backgrounds. I had no idea how much I was messing up my life until I hit rock bottom, but I recovered and overcame monumental odds. I would never be where I am right now without the services of CalWORKs. My circumstances would be so much more difficult. Until I graduate, I still need the help of TANF for the sake of my children. I'm working so hard to become independent. No matter what, I will persevere, but I'll have to take fewer classes, due to the costs of books and supplies and childcare, and my children will spend more time in poverty. Once I time out, my journey out of poverty will take much longer. So please think about my situation when you reauthorize TANF. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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